

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

In the claims:

2. **(Amended)** A method for facilitating refunds in a postage metering system, the method comprising the steps of:
- receiving at a computer a request for a refund of a postage amount, the request being associated with a postage meter;
 - using the computer for accessing a dispute account database for identifying a dispute account associated with the request;
 - determining, via the computer, if a value in the dispute account is acceptable for permitting a refund of the postage amount; and
 - at times when the value is determined to be acceptable for permitting the refund of the postage amount, refunding the postage amount to a user of the postage meter.
7. **(Amended)** A postage metering system comprising:
- a postage meter having a vault that accounts for postage dispensed by the postage meter and a processor for controlling operation of the postage meter;
 - a data center in communication with the postage meter, the data center having a central processing unit and a dispute account database, the dispute account data-basedatabase having a dispute account associated with the postage meter;
 - means for permitting communication between the postage meter and the data center;
 - wherein at times when the data center receives a request for a refund of a postage amount ~~from~~for the postage meter the central processing unit determines if a value in the dispute account is acceptable for permitting a refund of the postage amount and if it is the central processing unit ~~refunds~~initiates the refunding of the postage amount to a user of the postage meter.

8. A postage meter system as recited in claim 7, wherein ~~the postage meter includes a printing device and~~ the central processing unit refunds the postage amount to the user by sending enabling data useable by the ~~computer~~ processor for adding the postage amount to the postage meter vault.

9. A postage metering ~~device~~ system as recited in claim 8, wherein the postage meter further includes a printing device that prints a receipt of the postage amount refunded.